

MINUTE of MEETING of the EDUCATION EXECUTIVE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 25 OCTOBER 2016.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), David Dodds, Stuart Borrowman, Harry Cartmill, Alexander Davidson, Jim Dixon, Carl John, Dave King, Sarah King, Danny Logue, John McGinty, Anne McMillan, Andrew Miller, George Paul, Frank Toner and Jim Walker; Appointed Representatives Elsie Aitken, Myra Macpherson, Lynne McEwen and Margaret Russell; Parent Council Representative Eric Lumsden.

Apologies – Councillors Tony Boyle and Tom Conn; Appointed Representative John MacKinnon

Opening Comment

The Chair welcomed Councillor Jim Dixon to the meeting as the newly appointed member to the Education Executive replacing Councillor Angela Moohan.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The Education Executive approved the minute of the meeting held on 30th August 2016 as being a correct record. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. CONSULTATION ON DRAFT STATUTORY GUIDANCE - STANDARDS IN SCOTLAND'S SCHOOLS ECT. ACT 2000

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) providing details of the proposed response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the Draft Statutory Guidance for the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000.

The report recalled that the Scottish Government was seeking views on draft statutory guidance for Part 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, which makes amendments to the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000. This legislation was a key part of the Scottish Government's strategy to ensure that the life chances of children and young people were improved and that Scotland's education system delivers excellence and equity. The specific questions and suggested responses were set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

The draft statutory guidance was developed to support those who had responsibility for duties in relation to:

- Reducing inequalities of outcome for pupils experiencing them as a result of socio-economic disadvantage;
- The National Improvement Framework (NIF); and
- Planning and reporting duties at school and education authority levels.

Reducing inequalities of outcome for pupils experiencing them as a result of socio-economic disadvantage was in line with the ethos of the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy, and in line with current practice.

The Education Executive was asked to approve the proposed response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the Draft Statutory Guidance.

Decision

Approved the terms of the report.

4. EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE - PLAN FOR FLEXIBILITY AND CHOICE - UPDATE

The Education Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) informing members of the implementation of the council's plan to increase the Flexibility in Early Learning and Childcare, to meet the needs of working parents. Details of the performance indicators measuring uptake of flexible provision and wraparound care were attached as an appendix to the report.

The report explained that under section 52 of the Act, education authorities were required to have regard to the desirability of ensuring that the method by which it made early learning and childcare provision available was flexible enough to allow parents an appropriate degree of choice when deciding how to access the service.

The aim of the Act was that children experienced consistent high quality early learning and childcare, and alleviated the need for parents to change their child's provider during the day to provide additional hours due to a model of funding and placements based on one session of 2.5 hours a day. The Act envisaged that longer sessions of early learning and childcare should be available through local authorities for parents who needed it.

The report went on to advise that the council had consulted parents in 2013 and 2015 on how they would like to see flexibility and choice in pre-school provision increased. As a result of the 2013 consultation, a new model of pre-school provision had been piloted at four establishments in Session 2015/16 which had proved popular. Following the 2015 consultation, it was proposed that the new model of provision would be available at ten establishments in Session 2016/17. The report provided details of the new model of provision.

The Service Manager, Policy and Performance, advised that wraparound care was provide at all of the venues offering the flexible model of early learning and childcare. The number of children accessing wraparound places had increase from session 2014/15 to 2016/17.

The next consultation on the expansion of flexibility and choice in Early Learning and Childcare was scheduled for the second half of 2017. It was anticipated that national changes to the provision of early learning and childcare would shape this consultation.

In the meantime, it was proposed that authority be delegated to the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) to extend the provision of the flexible model of early learning and childcare, and wraparound care places, where demand for these services existed and there was available capacity within the school estate to make provision. It was anticipated that this would result in increased provision being offered in session 2017/18 to accompany planned expansion to the pre-school estate.

During the course of the discussion it was noted that page 2, item VII of the report implied that consideration at PDSP was “underway” however this had already taken place.

It was recommended that the Education Executive:

1. Note the implementation of the council’s Plan to increase the Flexibility in Early Learning and Childcare and meet the needs of working parents;
2. Approve the proposed future development of the Plan to Increase the Flexibility in Early Learning and Childcare by delegating the decision to establish additional full day early learning and childcare places and wraparound care establishments to the Head of Education (Learning Policy and Resources) to facilitate flexibility and choice, and to meet the needs of working parents.

Decision

Approved the terms of the report.